

**Submission  
No 18**

## **2012 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS**

**Organisation:** Glen Innes Severn Council  
**Name:** Mr Colin Price  
**Position:** Mayor  
**Date Received:** 5/02/2013

**Glen Innes Severn Council Submission to the Committee on Electoral Matters Inquiry into the 2012 Local Government Elections.**

**The Costs of the Elections:**

A preliminary cost to Council for the conducting of the 2012 Local Government elections was quoted as \$54,822 plus GST. Council has not received a tax invoice for the total cost of conducting this election from the Commission. It was understood from correspondence received from the Commission that this process was expected by the end of January 2013 with payment due in 30 days.

It will be of interest to compare the cost of self-run elections to an election conducted by the Electoral Commission.

**The experience of Councils that conducted their own elections:**

Glen Innes Severn Council resolved to have the NSW Electoral Commission conduct our local elections.

**Possible legislative changes to improve the efficiency of and participation in Local Government elections:**

The possible legislative change would be in the participation in Local Government elections as discussed below in point five (5).

**Non-residential voting in Local Government elections:**

This is a time consuming task requiring Council to facilitate, collate and amend forms if required with voters and then to email the report to the Commission. It seems a long drawn out process just for four (4) people. We have potential votes however, only one person at each residential address can vote. The second person must vote at the elections at their place of residence.

**The impact of requirements under the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981* on participation by candidates in Local Government elections and possible legislative changes to remove any barriers to participation:**

The *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981* (the Act) requires candidates for Local and State Government elections to have an official agent, a suitably qualified person appointed by a candidate, group, elected member or third-party campaigner to manage political donations and electoral expenditure.

An official agent is responsible for complying with the legislation on behalf of the candidate, group, elected member or third-party campaigner by whom they were appointed.

Those intending to be appointed as an official agent must successfully complete an online training program prior to their appointment.

A person must be registered as an official agent before accepting or disbursing any funds on behalf of a candidate, group or elected member.

A person can be an official agent for more than one candidate or group contesting an election. However, each appointment must be made separately.

The official agent retains office until they die, resign or are removed by the candidate or group that appointed them.

It is the opinion of the writer that the requirement of an agent under the *Election Funding, Expenditure and Disclosures Act 1981*, is a strong disincentive for possible candidates to register as a candidate. My opinion is that candidates who spend less than \$1,000 on their campaign should be exempted from the requirement to appoint an agent.

**Any other related matters.**

The "donkey vote" can cause significant distortions in Local Government elections. Can I suggest the adoption of a "round/circular" ballot paper? This would not eliminate the "donkey vote" however, would randomise it.



Cr Colin Price  
**MAYOR**